

## Workshops held to educate workforce on Lean Six Sigma

**by Rachel Newton**

A series of workshops were held in March at Pine Bluff Arsenal to educate the workforce on the concept of Lean Six Sigma (LSS). These two-hour courses were primarily designed to provide an understanding of LSS is, why PBA is deploying the concept and what the workforce can benefit from it, according to information from Emami Esmailpour, director of Engineering and Technology.

"There are all kinds of buzz words going around now. Lean enterprise is one of these buzz words and is being promoted from the top down in AMC (Army Materiel Command)," said David Deane, a project engineer with E&T and a point-of-contact within the directorate on LSS, in a recent interview. "The concept of the process means you are trying to eliminate your production defects. LSS goes a step further than lean. Lean means you want to get rid of your waste – all the non-value added items. Once the waste is eliminated, production processes are analyzed to eliminate defects."

One of the main purposes of the workshops was to educate the part of the workforce that will not be extensively trained in LSS, but will have some contact working on process lines, performing administrative duties, doing maintenance of processes, and those in a technical field.

The LSS workshops were conducted by Roy Weber with VSE Corporation, who is the facilitator under contract with Program Executive Office for Ammunition (PEO Ammunition) for the implementation of LSS at different sites under AMC (Army Material Command).

The LSS concept is being mandated AMC-wide.

"Six Sigma and lean enterprise were developed in response to the same problems," said Weber during one of the class sessions. "These problems were increased costs, missed schedules and lack of flexibility. Both concepts were developed within large corporations – Six Sigma at Motorola and lean enterprise at Toyota."

Breaking it down, Weber said that basically Six Sigma measures effectiveness and lean enterprise measures efficiency. "When you bring them both together you get a more affective quality management system (QMS)," he said. "This system reflects the culture of the organization and how the concept will be managed and also reflects the philosophy of management on how it provides products and services."

One of the key elements of QMS is a commitment to Continuous Measurable Improvement (CMI) and listening to the Voice of the Customer (VOC), said Weber. "These are some of the key concepts of the LSS green-belt classes," he said. "The VOC is the oxygen that enables the enterprise to survive and thrive."

Feedback from the workshops was both positive and negative. A few individuals who attended the classes think there is no leadership commitment to support and see the LSS program through, some commented on the external issues and customer requirements and saw them as a challenge for leadership, and a few talked about the lean processes they had seen and been involved with at PBA.

Several additional trainings will be implemented in the coming months including green and black belt trainings and certifications and an executive champion workshop.

A total of 245 people attended the workshops, which were held at the PBA Training Center.